Diplomatic Academy

MIDDLE EAST POLICY: THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN THE RESO OURCES AND THE DIPLOMACY

Part I: The Crisis of Resources and Sovereignty

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I

In the introduction to this part of the research, we reaffirm with total clarity that this work is not beholden to traditional academic references, which are often formulated in the corridors of Western research centers with a "modern orientalist" vision that reproduces intellectual guardianship. Instead, it is a serious and sincere attempt to build a youth-led analytical intellectual circle that views the crisis from the heart of the suffering and from within the geographical and political circle of the Middle East.

We do not reject the scientific method with its robust tools; rather, we declare our categorical rejection of "methodological dependency." For long years, this dependency has turned the Middle Eastern researcher into a mere passive transmitter of theories written about him, not for him—theories that described him as an "object" of study rather than an "actor" in history. The core objective is to deconstruct the current political scene with a "cold mind" that gathers the parties of the conflict and analyzes the international power equation from the perspective of pure national sovereignty, rather than disguised international guardianship.

II

The resource crisis in our region, as we see it, is not a crisis of "scarcity" or "shortage" in material capabilities, but is essentially a crisis of "authority" and sovereign management. International political consciousness—supported by the media machine and military force—has deliberately formulated a definition of our region as a mere "global energy reservoir" and a vital corridor for international trade, ignoring the fact that these are sovereign entities with the absolute right to determine the fate of their wealth.

This renewed colonial perspective has transformed our countries, particularly in the Arab world, from the role of the true "owner" capable of using resources as leverage and strategic decision-making tools, to the role of the faithful "guardian." In this role, the mission is limited to protecting the flow of wealth toward global markets and ensuring price stability in exchange for hollow promises of security stability and guarantees for political elites to remain in their positions.

What we call "stability" in the Middle East today is, in fact, a state of "imposed and externally directed silence." Regional states are granted limited political and economic "tips" and conditional international support, based on their literal commitment to geopolitical maps drawn in advance in closed rooms. As soon as any country attempts to exercise actual sovereignty over its resources or make a decision outside the context of major international interests, the resource immediately transforms from a developmental "blessing" into a tool for collective punishment through economic blockade or direct political intervention. Recent Western statements confirm this approach with unprecedented frankness; European powers are now linking "energy security" to their own "national security," implying that any sovereign decision in our region affecting these resources will be met with a violent reaction under the pretext of protecting global security. This embodies the peak of "international bullying" practiced by Western leaders.

III

When dissecting the internal economic structure, we find that the flaw in political consciousness has reflected destructively on how wealth is managed. "Rentier economies" have become entrenched, relying unilaterally on exporting raw materials without processing them or developing their added value. This economic model was not an independent national choice but an inevitable result of unequal interaction with the global capitalist system, which intended for us to remain "suppliers of raw materials." This rentier structure created a distorted relationship between the state and society. A ruling apparatus that does not rely on taxes paid by citizens does not find itself forced toward political accountability or transparency. This weakens popular participation and transforms the resource from a tool for strengthening the social contract into a means for buying loyalties and managing internal conflicts, ultimately serving the agendas of major powers that prefer dealing with easily directed local agents.

In this complex context, the dangerous role played by multinational corporations emerges as the other face of diminished sovereignty. These companies, with their complex technology and monopolistic expertise, have come to control the joints of production processes, making the host state technically and technologically dependent on them. These partnerships are often formulated under conditions of inequality, where companies impose legal and financial terms that sometimes place them above national sovereignty.

Therefore, we emphasize that the true battle for sovereignty begins with "investing in human capital." Quality education and authentic scientific research are the only tools capable of breaking the yoke of technical dependency. Today, Iraq serves as the world's most complex laboratory for the violation of sovereignty through the gateway of resource management. The economic interests of major global companies intersect with regional geopolitical ambitions, making Baghdad a living example of what international research centers describe as an "energy-annexed state."

IV

A critical reading of this scene cannot be complete without referring to what Greg Muttitt proposed in his work "Crude Designs." He asserts that the structure of Iraqi oil contracts after 2003 was not designed to build a strong independent state as much as it was designed to ensure the flow of supplies to the global market at competitive prices under the direct supervision of major international companies. This is evident in the subjection of technical and logistical decisions to companies like British Petroleum, ExxonMobil, and Total, creating a "technological dependency" that leaves national cadres as mere observers in their own giant fields.

However, the most dangerous aspect of sovereignty violation currently manifests in the organic relationship and near-absolute dependency shown by the current government toward Iran. This constitutes a stark geopolitical paradox: while Iraq possesses the second-largest oil reserves in OPEC, it finds itself shackled by the import of gas and electricity from Tehran to fill a chronic deficit gap.

This dependency is not just a technical need but a political tool used by Tehran to ensure Iraqi decision-making remains within its orbit. The Baker Institute for Public Policy indicates that Iraq has become the "financial lung" through which Iran breathes to bypass intensified US sanctions. The insistence of successive governments on linking Iraq's energy fate to Iran, despite international warnings and US pressure, reflects a lack of sovereign will to diversify energy sources or even invest in associated gas—which is currently flared in the air, a waste that represents a crime against the national economy and a violation of future generations' rights.

Reports from the International Energy Agency (IEA) confirm that Iraq possesses the technical capability to achieve self-sufficiency within a few years if it invested its resources independently. However, "political dependency" dictates the continued import of Iranian gas at prices often exceeding global rates, draining hard currency and making the Iraqi electrical system a hostage to any political decision issued from across the border.

V

This relationship goes beyond economic cooperation to reach a stage of "forced integration," where Iraqi oil resources become a means to fund regional projects that do not serve the Iraqi citizen. Meanwhile, major international companies are content with collecting their share of extracted oil without regard for the erosion of national sovereignty or the collapse of service infrastructure.

The radical and only solution to restoring the dignity of Iraqi decision-making lies in "nationalizing the will" before nationalizing the fields. This requires enacting a federal oil and gas law that ends quotas and dependency, and imposes a mandatory timeline to stop gas flaring and invest it locally. There is also a need to build an Arab and international electricity interconnection network to end the era of regional monopoly.
True sovereignty begins by transforming the Ministry of Oil from a mere "fuel station" for neighboring countries and major companies into a giant industrial institution that leads the refining and petrochemical sectors within borders. It must ensure that a barrel of Iraqi oil is a tool for building the state, not a means for mortgaging its future.

This includes building a constitutionally protected sovereign fund to prevent the squandering of wealth in regional influence struggles that have made Iraq an arena for settling international accounts instead of being a bridge for prosperity and economic leadership. Staying the course means continuing the model of the "fragile rentier state" that sells its sovereignty for the survival of elites in power.

VI

The Dialectic of Resource and State: Dissecting Sustainability Crises in the Greater Middle East

The Middle East—in its broad geopolitical sense—is a living laboratory for studying structural failure in resource management. The current crisis lies not in the scarcity of resources as a natural given, but in the "strategic management failure" that turned geological blessings into tools of conflict or decaying, unsustainable assets.

First: The Oil Rent Crisis and the Failure of Structural Transformation (Iran and Libya)

In analyzing oil resources, we find the crisis is no longer in the "quantity" produced, but in the failure to convert oil value into technological infrastructure.

In the Iranian case, the clash with the international system has led to sharp technological obsolescence in the extraction and refining sectors. A state sitting on massive reserves finds itself unable to efficiently meet growing domestic demand for derivatives, creating a deep internal consumption crisis. Oil here is no longer a means of development as much as it is a resource besieged by politics.

In Libya, the crisis appears even more acute from the perspective of political sociology; oil has transformed from a national resource to a "hostage" of armed actors and political deadlock. Production stability in Libya is subject to field power balances rather than market logic or technical efficiency.

Second: Depletion of Vital Space and Technical Desertification (Turkey and Syria)

Moving north toward Turkey, we notice another type of resource crisis. The massive industrial and urban expansion of the last two decades came at the expense of the vital and environmental space. There is rising academic criticism of the "commodification of natural resources," where the construction of large dams (such as the GAP project) led to radical demographic and environmental changes.

In the Syrian context, the crisis cannot be separated from recent history. The failure to manage oil and agricultural resources before 2011 was one of the silent drivers of the unrest.

VII

Syria's transformation from an oil-exporting country to one that subsists on energy aid is a direct result of infrastructure destruction and a lack of visionary foresight to compensate for natural production shortages. The depletion of resources in Syria today represents the "bottom of the crisis," where the conflict has shifted from a struggle for influence to a primitive struggle for survival resources (fuel and wheat).
Third: The Dilemma of "Growth vs. Resource" (Egypt and Ethiopia)
In the Nile Basin, the crisis is embodied in the conflict of national interests over a vital shared resource.

The Egyptian case represents a model of a state facing the "physical limits" of its growth; land, oil, and service resources are no longer able to keep up with the demographic explosion. On the other side, Ethiopia seeks to impose a new geopolitical reality through hydroelectric power. While this represents a leap in resource exploitation, it creates a regional stability crisis where the natural resource becomes a tool for political hegemony.

Fourth: Critical Conclusion and Future Prospects
The common denominator among these countries is the "absence of good resource governance." The Greater Middle East suffers from "resource syndrome," where oil, water, and land are viewed as tools to bolster political power rather than national assets for future generations. The criticism directed at these regimes focuses on:
Strategic Short-sightedness: Relying on temporary technical solutions (like desalination or imports) without addressing the roots of the consumption crisis.
Politicization of the Resource: Turning natural resources into leverage in regional disputes, disrupting supply chains and harming macroeconomic stability.

Neglect of Sustainable Development: Prioritizing quick profit or political survival over environmental balance, leading to the loss of vast areas of arable land and the premature depletion of oil and gas wells.

In conclusion, the resource crisis in the Middle East is not a geographical destiny as much as it is the result of public policies that failed to align state ambitions with the earth's potential. The stability previously witnessed by these countries was merely a cover for structural fragility that exploded once exposed to political or environmental shocks. The path toward correction requires a revolution in the concept of "national asset management," moving from a rentier mentality to a mentality of sustainability and technological innovation.

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